

COMMENDING EUGENE SLEDGE,
OF MOBILE, ALABAMA, FOR HIS
SERVICE DURING WORLD WAR II

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 27, 2007

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to recognize the late Dr. Eugene Sledge of Mobile, Alabama, for his courageous service during World War II.

After graduating from Mobile's Murphy High School, he entered Marion Military Institute to study to become an officer. However, as just a freshman, he signed on as a private in the Marines in order not to miss an opportunity at combat.

Private First Class Sledge was assigned to the 1st Marine Division. He trained as a mortarman and fought on Peleliu in September of 1944 and on Okinawa in the spring of 1945. Throughout these months, he kept a journal of his impressions of the fighting, keeping the notes between the pages of his Bible. These notes later became his memoir, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa*, which he published in 1981. Ken Burns, who recently produced the PBS documentary series "The War," relied heavily on this memoir. His memoir will also form the basis for the HBO series "The Pacific," the successor to "Band of Brothers."

At the end of the war, Corporal Sledge returned to Alabama where he earned both a bachelor of science and a master of science from Alabama Polytechnic Institute, now Auburn University. He earned his doctorate at the University of Florida and became assistant professor of biology at Alabama College, now the University of Montevallo. In 1970, Dr. Sledge was named a professor in the Department of Biology at the University of Montevallo, a position he held until his retirement in 1990.

Dr. Sledge passed away in 2001 before his second memoir, *China Marine: An Infantryman's Life after World War II*, was published.

Madam Speaker, the recognition of Dr. Eugene Sledge in "The War" documentary is an appropriate time for us to pause and thank him—and all of the soldiers who fought in World War II. His life and actions personified the very best America has to offer. I urge my colleagues to take a moment to pay tribute to the life of Dr. Sledge and his selfless devotion to our country and the freedom we enjoy. I also extend my thanks to his family for sharing the story of his courageous life with all of us.

OTHER MINORITIES SUFFER
MAJOR PERSECUTION AS WELL

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 27, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, recently, Dr. Awatar Singh Sekhon, Chairman of the Sikh Educational Trust and Managing Editor of the international Journal of Sikh Affairs, wrote to President Bush. He noted that "Sikhs live in peace and harmony in every democracy in the world; India is the only exception."

In his excellent letter, Dr. Sekhon outlines the tyranny and abuse the Sikhs have been

subjected to in India. While India talks and talks about being "the world's largest democracy," it continues to commit atrocities against the Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, and other minorities. Madam Speaker, the essence of democracy is self-determination.

As if the murders of 250,000 Sikhs by the Indian government (the number comes from the Punjab State Magistracy and human-rights groups) wasn't enough, Sikhs from outside India must get the formal permission of the Indian government to visit the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the seat of Sikhism, equivalent to the Vatican of the Sikhs. Suppose that Catholics were barred from Vatican City without permission of the Italian government. Do you think the world would be up in arms about that? Yet, the equivalent condition is imposed upon the Sikhs and nobody says a word. That is how deeply India's propaganda about being "the world's largest democracy" has permeated the world's perceptions, thanks to massive amounts of money spent to propagate this viewpoint through lobbying and media manipulation. It is time to wake up. Madam Speaker. It is time to call India on the carpet for its persecution of minorities.

If the tyranny against the Sikhs were all that India was doing, that would be bad enough. But it is compounded by the persecution of Christians and Muslims, as well as other minorities such as Assamese, Bodos, Dalits, Manipuris, Tamils, and others.

In Gujarat, 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims were killed in riots that a policeman told the newspapers were planned and organized by the Indian government. It has killed over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir while refusing to give the Kashmiris self-determination via a free and fair plebiscite on their status, as India promised the United Nations in 1948.

Christians have been prime targets of Indian persecution. Churches have been burned. Nuns have been raped and forced to drink their own urine, to the cheers of militant Hindu organizations such as the pro-Fascist Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), which produced a booklet on how to implicate Christians and other minorities in false criminal cases. Priests have been murdered, schools and prayer halls have been vandalized, and more than 300,000 Christians have been killed in Nagaland at the hands of the Indian government. Missionary Graham Staines was killed by a mob of Hindu militants along with his eight-year-old son. The killers poured gasoline over their jeep, set it on fire, and chanted "Victory to Hanuman." Missionary Joseph Cooper, an American, was expelled from the country after he was beaten up so badly that he had to spend a week in an Indian hospital. A Christian religious festival on the theme "Jesus is the Answer" was broken up by police gunfire after people there distributed religious literature.

In several Indian states, there are laws prohibiting anyone from converting to any religion but Hinduism.

Madam Speaker, this is unacceptable. We must support the rights of these minorities by stopping American aid to India and stopping our trade with India as well. It's clearly not benefitting the Indian people. Two thirds of the population lives on less than half a dollar a day. We must also demand a free and fair vote on independence for the Sikhs of Khalistan, the Christians of Nagalim, the Muslims of Kashmir, and all the various peoples seeking their freedom from India.

Madam Speaker, I would like to add Dr. Sekhon's excellent letter to the RECORD at this time.

THE SIKH EDUCATIONAL TRUST,
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, July 30, 2007.
Re: violation of religious and political rights
of Sikhs in India.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,
President, United States of America, The White
House, Washington, DC.

HONOURABLE PRESIDENT, I am writing this letter to seek your intervention in the religious affairs of the Sikhs, especially the Diaspora Sikhs in North America, Europe and other continents.

The Sikhs live in peace and harmony in every democracy in the world; India is the only exception. In fact, the Sikhs are treated as slaves even in the Punjab, which is the holy and historic homeland of the Sikhs. This is because the ruling class consists of Brahmins—who are only 4 percent of the population along with 10-11 percent of Hindus of other castes. Although a majority in the Punjab, the Sikhs are 2.5 percent of the huge population of India that is approximately 1.1 billion. It is because of the denial of the right of self-determination in our land that India is able to marginalize the Sikhs as a small minority. The Hindu-Brahmin rulers have pursued their anti-human agenda: (i) practice of unsociability against the native majority who are 65 percent of the population, and (ii) persecution of mono-theistic faiths—the Sikhs, the Christians and the Muslims, by maintaining an environment of fear and of crushing poverty.

In June 1984, even the facade of Secular Tolerance was discarded when the Indian Army assaulted the holiest shrine of the Sikhs—the Darbar Sahib (also known as the Golden Temple) including the Supreme Seat of Sikh Polity, the Akal Takht Sahib, killing tens of thousands of devotees inside the temple. The Indian administration has ever since maintained heavy presence of its intelligence and armed personnel in the state. No Sikh from outside India can visit his/her holy place and the seat of Sikhs' polity without having a formal 'visa' endorsement in their passport from the Indian Embassy or Consulate. Mr. President, this constitutes a violation of the Sikhs' religious rights. Pilgrimage to pay respect to Gurus is a right that should not depend on the caprice of a government. It certainly should not depend on the goodwill of a state that has not just failed to protect but has actually been an instrument of our persecution and destruction of our holy sites by wanton bombardment.

Mr. President, India is interfering in my religious affairs. As a free citizen of a free country, I cannot approve of the way the Sikhs are treated in India; I cannot condone the assault of the Indian Army on Darbar Sahib in June 1984; I cannot support that the Sikhs relinquish their right to self-determination. I am required to do all this in order to get a visa. And if I did any of these things, I would not be a Sikh. That means, in order to get an Indian visa, I am required to renounce my faith. That cannot be acceptable.

Mr. President, no Roman Catholic needs a visa to visit the Vatican, no Jew is prevented from visiting Jerusalem, a visa cannot be denied to a Muslim to go to Mecca, why do the Sikhs need to have India's Hindu/Brahmins (neither a religion nor a culture), permission to visit their holiest shrine? Indian administration's control of the Sikhs' shrines constitutes an intervention into their religious affairs. That's why, Honourable President, none of the elected representatives of the Sikhs accepted/initiated/endorsed the Indian Constitution of 1950. Under Article 25 of that Constitution, the Sikh faith and national

identity was 'de-recognized'. The Sikhs were constitutionally 'exterminated'. Because of this blatant injustice, the Sikhs, elected representatives—Sardar Hukam Singh, MP; Sardar Bhupinder Singh Maan, MP; and Sardar Kapur Singh, ICS, MP, MLA and National Professor of Sikhism—'Rejected' the Indian Constitution of 1950 and its Article 25, in its draft and final forms, every time it was put to vote in the Indian parliament—in 1948, on 26th November, 1949, in 1950 and on 6th September, 1966.

Honourable President, the question is why we, the Sikh citizens of the United States and Canada, of Europe, Far East, and other continents should need a 'Visa' or the permission of the predominantly Hindu-Brahmin administration. Especially after the June, 1984 assault on Darbar Sahib Complex—which is the Sikh Vatican—and an 'undeclared' war on the Sikhs ever since. This undeclared war has taken a heavy toll. The "Operation Bluestar" of June, 1984 was blessed by the government of a so-called 'democratic' state. The desecration of their holy places and wanton massacre of the Sikhs was carried out for no reason other than their demanding the right of self-determination honouring the pledges made to the Sikhs by Mahatma Gandhi and Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru. More than 250,000 innocent Sikh (majority of whom were infants, children, youth, females and the elderly) have been killed by Indian security forces. This is the hallmark of a fascist oligarchy, not a democracy.

In recent months, the arrests of Simranjit Singh Mann, Chief of Akali Dal Amritsar, Mann's vice president, Daljit Singh Dittu and the arrest warrants of an Editor and academic, Dr Sukhpreet Singh Udhoke, provide further evidence that repression of the Sikhs continues even in the Sikh majority state of the Punjab, the administration of which is headed by a Sikh, Prakash Badal. The former two are being tried, along with 30 other Sikhs, on charges of 'treason'. Treason against who? How does the Indian Constitution apply to the Sikhs when the Sikhs' elected representatives 'rejected' it repeatedly?

Mr. President, there is great anxiety among the Sikhs in Diaspora over the denial of their religious and political rights and repression of dissent. If India is not restrained by the international community and its leader—the USA—peace and security in the whole region would be undermined. In retrospect and historically, India was never a country; it was an empire (the British Empire). In its belly there are many peoples with legitimate right to self-determination—in Kashmir (mainly Muslim) in the Punjab (mainly Sikhs) in the states of Assam (mainly Christian) who are not a part of the Indian nation. The issues relating to the native majority—the children of lesser gods—encompass a huge section of humanity, as many as 700 million people. All this cannot be swept under the carpet or buried under slogans like 'India Shining'. The Sikhs want their own sovereign state—as they had been (1799 to 14th March, 1849, under a Sikh monarch Ranjit Singh) before the British take over, as an "annexed" state, of the Punjab in 1849. Until then, we want unrestricted access to our holy places. No Sikh should need a visa to go to the Punjab. And peaceful dissent should not just be tolerated; it should be respected and honoured. Is dissent not the hall mark of democracy?

I shall look forward to hearing from you.

With regards,

Respectfully submitted,

AWATAR SINGH SEKHON.

TRIBUTE TO THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF GILLESPIE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 27, 2007

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Gillespie Avenue Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Gillespie Avenue Baptist Church was established on August 4, 1907. The church's first meeting was held in a tent at the site where the church is today. Reverend F.M. Doewell was the first pastor called in September, 1907. He was one of only 15 pastors called to serve over this first 100 years.

On July 1, 1910, the membership began worship services in the basement of the new meeting house with Dr. M.D. Jeffries, President of Carson Newman College, preaching the first sermon in the new building.

On May 7, 1916, the church auditorium was completed and dedicated and a piano was approved and purchased later that same year for the church.

On January 7, 1917, the church voted to borrow money to pay the pastor's salary. The finance report at that time showed a balance of \$.16. Eight years later, the enrollment was 426 with an average attendance of 263 and the average Sunday offering was \$65.89.

On October 12, 1938, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Rose donated a pipe organ to the church in honor of their parents.

The original church building was destroyed by fire on January 22, 1961. Services were held in the new sanctuary on September 2, 1962, where they remain today.

I am proud to have such an outstanding Christian institution in my district.

Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize Gillespie Avenue Baptist Church on its 100th anniversary and may God bless this congregation in the years to come.

OHIO WILLOW WOOD CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF HELPING THE ORTHOTIC AND PROSTHETIC INDUSTRY

HON. DAVID L. HOBSON

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 27, 2007

Mr. HOBSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of Ohio Willow Wood, a leader in the prosthetic and orthotic industry. Over the years, the family-owned company based in Mt. Sterling, Ohio, has provided products to help amputees live full and active lifestyles.

In 1907, Ohio Willow Wood was founded by William E. Arbogast, who personally experienced the challenges of living as an amputee from injuries he suffered in a railroad accident. His experience with poorly-fitting, uncomfortable and unreliable prosthetic products inspired him to establish Ohio Willow Wood.

Over the next century, the company that started out making it easier for prosthetists to obtain quality materials for their patients, became a global leader in designing and manu-

facturing lower limb prosthetic components. Through innovative research and development, the company has been responsible for several breakthroughs in the prosthetic industry. These include the first American-made "solid ankle, cushion heel" (SACH) foot, and the Alpha Liner, which is the first fabric-covered, gel interface system that improves the comfort and protection for prosthetic users. Ohio Willow Wood is also involved in research and development of new products and technology for the U.S. Army to use in its treatment of victims of lower extremity loss.

In addition to designing and manufacturing prosthetic products, Ohio Willow Wood develops Computer Aided Design (CAD) software and equipment for the orthotic and prosthetic community. The company also has global distribution partners and direct offices in Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands.

While many aspects of Ohio Willow Wood have evolved and changed over the past 100 years, the company's commitment to the orthotic and prosthetic industry remains constant. Today, third and fourth generations of the Arbogast family are active in the daily operations of Ohio Willow Wood, standing by its promise to free the bodies and spirits of amputees.

Madam Speaker, I commend all of the employees at Ohio Willow Wood for reaching this milestone, and I wish them continued success in the years to come.

H.R. 2900, THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2007

HON. MIKE FERGUSON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 27, 2007

Mr. FERGUSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for the passage of the Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act of 2007 (FDAAA). This critical piece of legislation reauthorizes the Prescription Drug User Fee Act (PDUFA) and provides the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with additional resources to further promote and protect the public health. The FDAAA reinforces and expands FDA's comprehensive authority in all aspects of drug regulation—including with respect to drug safety and labeling—and takes the nation's drug safety system, which is already the most rigorous, and makes it even stronger. I commend my colleagues and their dedicated staff on both sides of the aisle who worked tirelessly to ensure that this bill was completed in a bipartisan manner before the September 30, 2007 expiration of the existing PDUFA program.

The funds from PDUFA are used to allow FDA to hire additional staff to perform its critical drug review functions while maintaining the same exacting standards for safety and efficacy. Additional funding provided as part of FDAAA will allow the FDA to expand drug safety monitoring, hire additional staff for post-market surveillance, and modernize its information technology systems. Expanded resources will also enable FDA to hire additional employees to review broadcast drug advertisements prior to public dissemination, helping to ensure that benefits and risks of prescription drug products are clearly and accurately communicated to the public. The legislation creates strong incentives for companies to submit